Box 74 13

A Brief Account

OF THE

Illegal Proceedings

and SINFUL DOCTRINES of

JAMES BEDFORD

Prieſt of *Blunſome* and *Earith* in *Hunting-ton* SHIRE,

Who by many hath been eſteemed eminent, and above all the Prieſts in the Iſle of *Ely* for his oppoſing the People called QUAKERS.

This is to diſcover his fruits and Doctrines both to Rulers, Prieſts and people, that both Rulers, Prieſts and people may ſee the iniquity that is upheld amongſt them, and which many of the Prieſts ſtill perſiſt in; this is to diſcover to them a little of their abomination (among much more that they are found in and of the horrible and filthy thing that is committed in the Land, and in particular by James Bedford *Prieſt of* Blunſome *and* Earith *in* Huntington *Shire, that ſo they that will uphold or countenance theſe Prieſts in their iniquities may be left without excuſe, and they that love their ſouls may ſave themſelves from that perverſe generation, who are deſtroyers both of bodies and ſouls for diſhoneſt gain. becauſe of whoſe iniquities the Nations deeply ſuffers and wants the true eſtabliſhment; for it is Right ouſneſſe that eſtabliſheth a Nation, and Iniquity that confounds and imbondageth it; So mark the following account, which is as it was certified from the hands of ſome of the Sufferers hereafter mentioned, who are known to be credible and honeſt men.*

London, Printed for *Thomas Simmons* at the ſigne of the *Bull* and *Mouth* near *Alderſgate*, 1660.

The ſaid Prieſt Bedford *his proceedings againſt* John Cranwell *of* Earith *for the four years paſt &c.*

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THe two former years he the ſaid Prieſt *Bedford* came into *John Cranwells* Field, and took 4 Lambs without leave, and ſent his men for Tithe Wool at ſhear-day, but *John Cranwell* refuſed to give him any (becauſe he was convinced in his conſcience that Tithes now in the prieſthood of Chriſt ought not to be paid, and that it was not equity that he ſhould maintain ſuch a Miniſter as he is not taught by) whereupon the ſaid Prieſt *Bedford* ſent his men and unlockt *John Cranwells* barn door, and took away as much wool as they thought good, and alſo took away of his Hay and Corn what they would, and did caſt *John Cranwell* into *Huntington* Goal; So the Prieſt having dealt thus illegally (and as appears being convicted in his conſcience of the unlawfulneſs of this his proceedings.) The two laſt years, the Prieſt ſaid he would go on Legally, in the year 1658. he did fetch a warrant for *John Cranwell* to bring him before two Juſtices to ſhew cauſe why *John* had not ſet forth his Tithe, which *J C.* did ſhew before Juſtice *Pedley* and *Robert Vintener*, ſo after ſome words paſſed, they called three men to be ſworn; then they did ask them what Lambs and ſheep *John Cranwell* had that year, and what Hay and Corn, and what they did value the Tithe of them to be worth that year; and they did value it at 12*l.* almoſt; but if *John* would pay the Prieſt, they ſaid they would abate twenty ſhillings, *John* told them he oweth the Prieſt nothing, nor would give him any thing; Then they ſaid they would make a warrant for fifteen pounds, which they did; And a while after Prieſt *Bedford* came with the Conſtable and took three Cows which was with calf, which the Conſtable ſaid was worth 15.*l.* alſo they took 4 Carts, and 4 pair of wheels which alſo was worth 15. pound, but they brought three again, and kept one of them, (*viz.* the beſt) worth ſix pounds, and ſo they took one and twenty pounds worth of goods for Tithes demanded but to the value

of twelve pounds, according to their own account. But mark how this said Prieſt hath added to his Iniquity, In the year 1659. the ſaid *James Bedford* the prieſt came violently with two rude fellows with him upon *John Cranwells* ground, and the prieſt ſaid to *John Cranwells* Son that he came for Tithe Hay, and *Johns* Son diſcharged them off his fathers ground, and the Prieſt ſaid he did not care for that, he came for his dues; ſo *Johns* Son whipped away their horſes (when the Prieſt would not remove them) upon which one of the Prieſts men ſwore that if he whipped away their horſes again, he would run his fork into his belly, then the Prieſt ſaid he would bear him harmleſs if it coſt him an hundred pounds, and the Prieſt then threatened to overthrow *John Cranwells* Cart, which Cart ſtood then loaden upon *Johns* own ground a little way off them; and *Johns* ſon putting away the Prieſts horſes again, (notwithſtanding his and his mens threatnings) the Prieſt rode galloping, and ſtriving to make *John Cranwells* horſes overthrow the Cart; and *John Cranwels* Son told the Prieſt it was a ſhame for him to take away his Fathers goods in that manner; the Prieſt ſaid he could finde in his heart, if he were not a Miniſter, to come off his horſe and whip *John Cranwells* Son; ſo the Prieſt forcibly took away what Hay he would.

And moreover the Prieſt his men came by night, & bound up and carried away half an aker, and half another half aker of *Jo. Cranwells* wheat, and about the worth of another rood of wheat the Prieſt took away for ſmall Tithe, as he ſaid.

And the ſaid Prieſts men violently took away of *Jo. Cranwells* Barly & peaſe as much as they would, never ſetting out the Tithe, ſo that the quantity of or worth of all *I.Cs.* Goods which this Prieſt hath taken away cannot be certainly known, he hath taken away ſo much in ſuch an illegal & fellonious manner, as all that reads this may judge, and ſee what fruits are brought forth by theſe Teachers in this Nation, who profeſſe to be Miniſters of the Goſpel, and to take the cure of ſouls, when thus they are found in Robbery and oppreſſing the people, and to theſe unjuſt proceedings they take the more Liberty from the Rulers not putting a ſtop to them, pretending they have the Law & Government on their ſides.

To all the aforeſaid wicked actings of Prieſt Bedford, *thoſe whoſe names*

names are hereunto annexed, can teſtifie the truth of the ſame, Richard Catlin, Stephen Chody, Matthew Peacock, Bennet Cranwel.

And likewiſe take notice of the further Illegal proceedings of the ſaid *James Bedford* againſt *Thomas Purcas* of *Blunſome*; as firſt of all in the year, 1655. it ſeemed not enough for the ſaid Prieſt *Bedford* to caſt *Thomas Purcas* into priſon, but after he was forth of priſon, ſent his men to the land of the ſaid *Thomas Purcas*, and took away what of his Hay and Corn they would. And alſo at another time the ſaid Prieſt ſent his man into his yard, and fetcht away a Pig after a fellonious manner, and ſaid his Maſter would bear him harmleſſe. Moreover in the year 1658. the ſaid *James Bedford* caſt the ſaid *Thomas Purcas* into priſon again, where he continued nine weeks, and after he was forth of Priſon, he ſent his men upon the land of the ſaid *Thomas Purcas*, and took away from him what they would, as aforeſaid. And moreover in the year 1659. Prieſt *Bedford* himſelf came upon a land of the ſaid *Thomas Purcas*, & beat off the ſaid *Thomas* his Team, and took away all the Grain of that Land except three Sheaves; And yet notwithſtanding all this his ſo wicked actings, his covetouſneſſe in all this was not ſatisfied, but ſent his men to another land of the ſaid *Thomas*, and out of ſix ſhockes took away five and left but one, and his ſervant *Thomas Bar* by force pulled away the ſheaves out of the ſaid *Thomas* his cart, and other of his men at ſeveral other times did the like.

To all which aforeſaid ſeveral actions done by the ſaid Prieſt and his men, there are many witneſſes can teſtifie the ſame; wherefore men may here plainly ſee what ſpirit this Prieſt Bedford *is of, and in what paths he walks, even in the ſteps of the falſe prophets which Chriſt propheſied of, which ſhould appear in ſheeps cloathing, but inwardly ravening Wolves, as by his fruits aforeſaid he is made manifeſt*, Mat. 7. 15.

And now ſeeing this ſaid Prieſt *Beford* hath been had in great eſteem for an eminent diſputant againſt the *Quakers*, and after a meeting that *John Whitehead* had with him at *Hadnam* in the *Ile* of *Ely*, Juſtice *Caſtle* of *Hadnam* did eſteem of this Prieſt *Bedford* above all the Prieſts in the *Ile* of *Ely*, in ſaying *That he had done more (in diſputing againſt* John White-

Whitehead) *then any Minister in the* Ile *of* Ely *would have done*, and so he set him above all the Priests in that *Ile*, (though his folly and confusion was plainly manifest both at that meeting and other places;) Therefore take notice of some of the Priests Doctrines here, from whence the Readers hereof may easily judge what an ignorant company of Priests they have in the *Ile* of *Ely*, if this Priest *Bedford* be above them all.

Pr. At the said meeting, he the said Priest *Bedford* denyed *that every man is enlightned with a spiritual Light*, and affirmed *that the light within led men to murther*, instancing for his proof, John 16. 2. *and* Pauls *persecuting the Saints.*

Answ. Christ is the true Light that lighteth every man that cometh into the World, and his light with which he enlightens every man is Spiritual; so the Priest in saying that *the light within led men to murther*, he hath blasphemed against the Light of Christ, who *came not destroy mens lives but to save them*; and the gifts of his light or grace which he gives freely unto man-kinde, are of the same Nature that Christ is of from whence they flow forth, and what *Paul* did in persecuting the Saints, he did it ignorantly and not by the light, for the light shewed him his transgression in so doing, and they spoken of *John* 16. 2. who thought they did God service in killing the Saints were not led by the light, for they and their thoughts were deceived by him who was a murtherer from the beginning.

Pr. At a meeting which was at *Blunsome* Steeple-house the fourteenth day of the twelfth moneth, where *George Whitehead* opposed the said Priest *Bedford*, the Priest scoffed at quaking and trembling, judging it *to be of the Devil*, as also he did at falling down (as some have done when they were smitten by the power of God.)

Ans. Here the priest scoft at the power of God, and reproached its work, which caused *Moses* to quake, and *Davids* flesh to tremble, and him to morne all the day long, and the word of the Lord said unto *Ezekiel*, *Son of man*, *eat thy bread with quaking*, and *Paul* fell down to the earth when he was smitten, and he trembled, and said work out your salvation with fear and trembling, and *Iohn* fell down at the feet

of

of Christ; many more examples might be shewn for this against Pr. *Bedfords* blasphemy, whom we ask if it was not the power of God that caused the Devils to tremble? Surely he is not come so farre as the devils were, to acknowledge the power of God, when they confessed to the Name of Jesus, *Eze.* 12. 17, 18. *Acts*, 9. 4. 6. *Rev.* 1. 17.

Pr. *Bedford scoft at the Quakers silent meeting, and called it a Rediculous Foppery.*

Ans. So he might as well have scoft at *Iob* and his Friends for sitting upon the ground together in silence seven dayes and seven nights, *Iob.* 2. 13. *ch.* 3. 1. And at *Ezekiel*, who witnessed the like, *Ezek.* 3. 15, 16, 17. And saith the Lord, keep silent O yee Islands before me, and let the People renew their strength; so the Prophets and Holy men of God knew a time to be silent and a time to speak, and in silence they waiting renewed their strength.

Pr. *Bedford much scoffed at going naked; Instancing a friends going naked in Cambridge.*

Ans. So he would have scoffed at the Prophet *Isays*, going naked and barefoot for a sign and a wonder, *Isa.* 20. and at *Sauls* being naked a day and a night when the Spirit of the Lord was upon him, and therefore it was said is *Saul* also among the Prophets? 1*Sam.* 19. 23, 24. And some of the servants of the Lord in this age, have been moved to go naked, for a signe to those whose shame and nakedness the Lord would discover, as he hath done the priests nakedness, and the Schollers of *Cambridge* their shame and filthiness, since the friend went naked there.

Pr. *Affirmed that the Quakers tread under foot the word of God, in denying the Scriptures to be the Word.*

Ans. This is also a lie and a slander, for we own the Scriptures in their place in owning that to be the Word which they say is the Word, and that is God and Christ, who was before the Scriptures (which is the writtings) were; wherein are the words that God spoke, but the word was before the words or writtings were.

Pr. *Affirmed that all the Scriptures from the beginning of Genesis to the end of the Revelation is the word of God, and that the Devils words are the word of God.*

Ans. So you may see here this priest makes no distinction be-

between the Devils words (which are in many places recorded in the Scripture) and the word of God, but in counting the Devils words the word of God, he would here make the Divell a Minister of Gods word, and here all may see his blasphemy, for the Devil was a liar from the begining, as he was when he tempted the woman, and spoke quite contrary to what God had said, *Gen.* 3. 3, 4.

Pr. That the Colledges were not built by the Papists, for he said the Colledge at Jerusalem was before the Papists were, 2 *Kin* 22. 14.

Ans. See what a silly priest this is, the Colledge (so called) at Jerusalem was but one, and theres no mention of any being made Ministers at it; but that *Huldah* a Propheteſs dwelt in that Colledge, who spoke the words of the Lord, such a one as the priests will not allow to preach; but here are many Colledges in *England*, at *Oxford* and *Cambridge*, which this priest *Bedford* could not clear from being built by Papists. Also this Priest *Bedfords* deceit and lies against the people of God called Quakers, was taken notice of in many other things which he read in a book, as he had gathered them out of the priests books; and that he durst not at all fairly dispute with *G. Whithead* at the said meeting, but filled up much of the time with vain stories, lyes, and scoffing, laughing, and filthy talk not fit to be mentioned, of which many of his hearers were so ashamed, till many of them cryed out against him, and some said he was mad, and others asked what he was else but a beast? When he spoke much of a Quakers calling him a beast, which he was proved to be from *Titus.* 1. 10. 11, 12, 13. And thus poor people have long been led captive by such prophane priests as this, whose prophaneſs is gone abroad, and will remaine upon record for future ages, by whose iniquities the soul of the Righteous is grieved, and this Nation greatly suffereth by reason of such prophane Teachers, who are the Leaders that cause the people to erre: And how can ever a Nation be setled in peace, while such are upheld by the Rulers to be leaders of the people as oppresse them, whose practices and principles tends to the ruin both of bodies and soules, let the serious consider it, and the people lay it to heart.

G. W.

THE END.